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RUEHCI/AMCONSUL KOLKATA 3877
RUEHNEH/AMCONSUL HYDERABAD 0551
RUEHKA/AMEMBASSY DHAKA 2132
RUEHIL/AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD 6031
RUEHKT/AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU 2580
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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION: INDO-PAK RELATIONS, TALIBAN /
PAKISTAN, PAKISTAN, NEPAL; NEW DELHI MAY 09-11, 2009.

This countrywide cable reports on relevant media reaction/opinion from India's large non-English press. The Mission reports on English-language media via email through the daily "Early Edition" summary.

INDO-PAK RELATIONS

1. "FRESH DIALOGUE WITH INDIA," editorial in the May 8 right-of-center Urdu daily SIASAT: "Pakistan today is in the grip of grave dangers both within and from outside. It is imperative for Pakistan to improve its ties with India. Who is behind enervating and destabilizing Pakistan? The needle of suspicion oscillates between the Taliban & the United States. As far as fresh dialogue between India and Pakistan is concerned, Zardari is dropping hints. The days to come will tell us what kind of relations the new government in New Delhi wants with Pakistan. The leadership in Pakistan has become totally flustered by a series of failures. American influence and interference has further complicated things. The situation -- and bilateral ties between India and Pakistan -- are likely to improve significantly once an amicable climate for dialogue is created."

TALIBAN / PAKISTAN

¶2. "HOPE AGAINST TERRORISM," editorial in the May 9 nationalist RASHTRIYA SAHARA Hindi daily: "Pakistan's military offensive against the Taliban raises hopes that it is finally moving in the right direction. Both Afghanistan and Pakistan need the international community's guidance and cooperation to fight terrorism. The U.S. has promised economic aid to Pakistan, but it cannot provide it without seeing honest and effective action by Pakistan on the terrorism front."

¶3. "JOINT-WAR AGAINST TALIBAN," editorial in the May 9 centrist DAINIK HINDUSTAN Hindi daily: "The Pakistani army is the real obstacle in the trilateral -- U.S.-Afghanistan-Pakistan -- initiative. Being the only powerful and organized force in the region, the Pakistani army can play an important role in the war against the Taliban. But the U.S. would be well advised not to depend on the Pakistani Army; the permanent solution to Pakistan's miseries is democracy."

¶4. "NEED FOR A STRONG STANCE AGAINST TALIBAN," editorial in the May 9 right-of-center Urdu daily RASHTRIYA SAHARA: "There have been incidents of escalated tension between the Pakistani army and the Taliban in Pakistan recently. That suggests the Pakistani government has adopted a tough stance against the Taliban, even though just a few weeks back the Pakistani government entered into an agreement with the Taliban allowing it to impose Shariah (Islamic law) in

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the Swat Valley and adjoining tribal areas. Despite that agreement, Taliban fighters continued to indulge in terrorist activities. In fact, they even went to the extent of imposing the Jizya (religious tax) on the region's Sikhs - a totally un-Islamic policy, as a result of which thousands of Sikhs were forced to migrate to safer havens."

¶5. "OPERATION AGAINST TALIBAN," editorial in the May 9 Guwahati Assamese centrist DAINIK JANASADHARAN. "Obama's strong stand has forced the Zardari government to take military action against the advancing Taliban. The success of the army operation is important to Pakistan's stability, and to winning the ongoing war against terrorism. Though the current offensive against the Taliban seems to be moving in the right direction, it is an acid test for Pakistan, because a large portion of Pakistanis -- including the army, the ISI and government officials -- is none too happy about taking such actions under threat from the U.S."

PAKISTAN

¶6. "A NEW BATTLEFRONT FOR AMERICA," editorial in the May 9 right-of-center Urdu daily HAMARA SAMAJ: "The most plausible reason for the United States to wage a war against Pakistan is the nuclear prowess possessed by the latter. America evidently does not have the capability to fight a terrestrial war, knowing full well it can only fight aerial wars. At this juncture, it is imperative for America to think rationally and avoid pushing the world to the brink of a third world war. A minor mistake could ignite the world and push it into global war. Before countries like China and Russia begin to intervene and start asserting themselves, it would be prudent for America to mend its course, thus preventing a catastrophe which has the potential to devastate the world."

¶7. "ZARDARI'S HALF TRUTH" editorial in the May 11 right of center Marathi daily Saamna. "Pakistan is in no danger from India. That comes from none other than

Pakistani President Asif Ali Zardari. He has also reiterated that Pakistan faces real danger from the terrorists hiding in its own country. Just two days back Pakistan moved some troops away from the Indian border. This 'confession' from Zardari and the decision to withdraw some of these troops comes after that. But it does not come from a sense of remorse -- it is a result of American pressure."

NEPAL

18. "NEPAL CRISIS DUE TO OBSTINATE PRACHANDA" op-ed in the May 9 centrist Marathi daily PRAHAAR by Chandrashekhhar Joshi. "India's one time trusted neighbor Nepal is undergoing a political and

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constitutional crisis over the dismissal of Nepal Army head Rukmagand Katwal. To solve this crisis President Rambharan Yadav gave the parties one week - until May 9 - to form a government. But there was no response. Even if there were a momentary understanding of sorts, nobody knows how permanent it would be. The crisis in Nepal is not limited to the dismissal or reinstatement of the Army chief. The crisis is ideological. It comes down to a choice between democracy and Chinese-style Maoist dictatorship."
BURLEIGH